



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 8, 2006

## FACT SHEET

### **MAYOR SANDERS, COUNCILMEMBER HUESO ANNOUNCE CITY'S RENEWED COMMITMENT TO GRAFFITI ABATEMENT PROGRAM**

#### ***FY07 Budget includes 59% Increase to Help Battle Urban Blight***

The FY07 City budget that Mayor Jerry Sanders signed into law yesterday includes \$1.4 million for graffiti abatement. This represents a 59% increase (\$521,194 in additional funds) over the \$877,701 found in the FY06 City budget. Sanders and Eighth District Councilmember Ben Hueso today announced the City's renewed commitment to fighting this urban blight.

Faced with severe budget cuts to the program over the past three years, a backlog of nearly 600 graffiti cases involving privately owned property has developed. To address this problem, the Mayor and Council approved a Graffiti Control Program budget for FY07 that adds two utility workers, bringing the total to eight workers tasked with removing graffiti in the public right-of-way and on City-owned property. In FY07, there will be 12 workers overall assigned to the program.

Also included in the budget is an increase of \$230,000 to Urban Corps for private property graffiti removal, bringing Urban Corps' total allocation in FY07 to \$480,000. This is more than double the FY06 funding levels for private property graffiti removal.

#### **GRAFFITI CONTROL PROGRAM BUDGET**

	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>
Graffiti Control	\$632,775	\$801,862
Community Outreach	\$114,926	\$117,033
Urban Corps	<u>\$130,000</u>	<u>\$480,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	\$877,701	\$1,398,895 (59% increase over FY06)

#### **GRAFFITI CONTROL PROGRAM STAFFING**

<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>
10	12

### **Mayor Sanders on the Importance of Graffiti Abatement:**

“Finding the funds to help wipe out graffiti in our older, urban neighborhoods will continue to be a top priority for me. Graffiti is blight, and blight leads to crime. Increasing the funding for graffiti abatement isn’t just about aesthetics; it’s about making our neighborhoods safer.”

Mayor Jerry Sanders

### **BACKGROUND:**

The City’s Graffiti Control Program, created in 1992, uses a multi-faceted approach to eliminate graffiti vandalism and resulting blight.

- The public can call the one-stop **Graffiti Hotline** at **(619) 525-8522** for information and to report graffiti.
- Program staff and contractors engage in the **removal of graffiti** and work with businesses and large institutions to keep their properties graffiti-free.
- **Code enforcement** officers notify private property owners who are in violation, and enforce provisions designed to control theft and the illegal sale of spray paint and glass etching products to minors.
- Property owners and volunteers may receive **free recycled paint and supplies** to remove graffiti by calling **William Beckwith, Utility Worker II**, at **(619) 527-5419** to make an appointment.
- **Prevention and education efforts** enhance public awareness through the Neighborhood Code Compliance Department Graffiti Control Program website at <http://www.sandiego.gov/graffiti/index.shtml> and through community presentations.
- Program staff coordinates with the Police Department’s **Graffiti Strike Force** and members of the criminal justice community to influence arrest rates and implement deterrent sentencing of graffiti vandals.

### **Response Times for Graffiti Removal**

Public right-of-way/City-owned property – 48 hours.  
Private property (with owner consent on file) – 48 hours.  
Private property (without owner consent) – 15 to 20 days.

### **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AND CONTACT INFORMATION:**

- Community paint-outs – **Tommy Thomas, Field Representative, (619) 527-3105.**
- Office assistance – **Frank Hafner, Deputy Director (619) 236-5504.**

### **Current Program Challenges:**

- During Fiscal Year 2006, Graffiti Control Program staff budget cuts included the Program Manager, one Code Compliance Officer, and one Utility Worker I. In addition to these three positions, the Word Processing Operator position was vacated and it has been unfilled due to budget constraints. These four positions represent one-quarter of the program's staff.
- The current Legacy automated service request system has limited capability to produce effective statistics.
- Backlog of 600 cases on private property.
- Currently, the program has only two staff to investigate graffiti citywide, which is a labor-intensive proposition. It is necessary to determine if the graffiti is located on public or private property and to identify the name and address of the property owner. These staff members also send notices requiring property owners to voluntarily remove graffiti (using their own paint). Property owners may also sign a consent form to allow the Urban Corps to remove it. This is done with a limited supply of colors which may or may not match existing paint.

### **Current Strategies to Address Challenges:**

- The Fiscal Year 2007 Graffiti Control Program budget has been increased to add two Utility Workers. This increase brings the program's total number of Utility Workers tasked with removing graffiti in the public right-of-way and on City-owned property to eight positions.
- The \$230,000 allocation to the Urban Corps for private property graffiti removal will be increased by \$250,000 to a total of \$480,000. This is more than double the current funding levels for private property graffiti removal.
- Graffiti that was painted on private property with the owner's permission will be aggressively pursued.

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